



ALBERTA MEN'S NETWORK

Honouring Fathers and Daughters

A Bond Worth Celebrating



Treaty 7 Territory Land Acknowledgement

Alberta Men's Network acknowledges that we organize, work, live, and play on the traditional homelands of the Blackfoot Confederacy: the Siksika, Kainai and Piikani; their Treaty 7 cosignatories: the Tsuut'ina and Îyâxe Nakoda Nations; the Métis (MNA Region 3) and those who call Calgary (Mohkinstsis) home. We recognize, as settlers and guests, that we are on Indigenous homelands and express our gratitude and appreciation for the Indigenous people who live here and have shared their knowledge. We are committed to taking action on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's 94 Calls to Action (2015) and the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls: Reclaiming Power and Place (2019).

Community Acknowledgements

We are happy to share this community report of the 2019 **Honouring Fathers and Daughters** event and its significance. We would like to express our gratitude to all participants, the community volunteers, organizing team, organizing partners, and funders who came together and contributed to the events success. **Organizing team:** Abbas Mancey, Amir Jamal, Anna Hemens, Ayushma Nath, Doug Murphy, Jeff Halvorsen, Gurjeet Bansal Khutan, Javeria Taha, Lemlem Haile, Liza Lorenzetti, Madan Nath, Noreen Mahmood, Parisa Lorenzetti & Roma Akram. **Organizational partners:** Alberta Men's Network, Women Support Group Calgary, University of Calgary Faculty of Social Work, Alberta Network of Immigrant Women, Calgary Pashtun Association & **Funders:** Northern Lights Small Grants Initiative, North East Family Connections, Action Dignity, Alberta Status of Women and The Calgary Foundation.

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Who is Alberta Men's Network?

The Alberta Men's Network, supported by Men's Action Network Calgary, Alberta Network of Immigrant Women, and the University of Calgary, Faculty of Social Work, is a community committed to nonviolence and working across the gender spectrum to create healthy families and communities. We support healthy masculinities and gender equity by identifying and working within a human rights, feminist and anticolonial framework. AMN is made up of dedicated members who belong to community, non-profit, academic, social service, government, business, and other sectors in Alberta. Our human rights, feminist and anticolonial lens is a firm foundation from which to build community supports and programs to transform our structures and the social norms that perpetuate violence and inequality. With diversity as our strength, AMN believes that cultural humility, respect, and solidarity through love are cornerstones of men's violence prevention work.

Honoring Fathers and Daughters Event: Overview



Alberta Men's Network members see the critical need to find creative ways to engage men, their peers, and families to help build a society that is equitable, just, and free from oppression. Across cultures, men are discouraged from having close relationships with their daughters. Many men (fathers and father-figures) suppress these natural emotions about nurturing parental relationships as a result of societal expectations. These cultural norms and traditions perpetuate negative notions of masculinity and contribute to unhealthy relationships within families. Honouring Fathers and Daughters put a spotlight on the special relationship between fathers and daughters and acknowledge the importance of girl children in a global climate where often boys are still preferred and privileged (Allen & Daly, 2007; Nielsen, 2012).

Research suggests that the involvement of men in care work, such as parenting, cultivates family cohesion and benefits the emotional wellbeing and happiness of fathers and their children (Nielsen, 2012; Van Der Gaag, Heilman, Gupta, Nembhard, & Barker, 2019). Positive

father-daughter relationships and/or positive male role models encourage self-esteem and foster healthy relationship building skills (Allen & Daly, 2007; Van Der Gaag et al., 2019).

The first Honoring Fathers & Daughters event was hosted in 2017, led by fathers in the Alberta Men's Network who wanted to create more positive social norms around fatherhood within their own cultural communities. The intention of the event was to be both celebratory and to encourage healthy bonds and relationships between fathers and daughters. All family members were welcomed to attend and come together to enjoy food and community. The response by people in multiple communities was very encouraging; the 2017 event had over 100 attendees and in 2019, 65 participated (19 men, 29 children and 17 women).

The event was co-hosted by Ayushma and Parisa, two daughters of AMN members. We were fortunate to have many community members volunteer to facilitate the family activities. Lovella Penaranda offered face painting which was very popular for children. After getting their faces painted children would often wander over to the photo booth which had different accessories to choose and families the opportunity to take family pictures and portraits for their own memories. Sajjad Ahmad facilitated the craft table where children made beaded necklaces and bracelets. Some of the dads, older children, and volunteers helped the younger children make their necklaces and bracelets so that every child left with a craft of their creation. The most popular activity and a challenge for the dads was the quiz booth which was facilitated by Anna Hemens. Dads and daughters had to answer questions about each other separately then compare answers to see how much they really know about each other. Questions included: 'What is a dad?' 'Name your daughter's favorite food, color, movie, etc.' and 'What activities most takes up their time on the weekends?' Prizes were given out if participants got the majority of their answered correct. This activity generated lots of laughter and fun and brought some dads and daughters closer together.

“I feel its so important to value the “father & daughter” relationship and also their important roles to play.”

- A Participant on why they decided to attend this event

“Yes – the value of communicating with kids and particularly daughters. Share thoughts, problems”.

-A participant in response to what activities or strategies did they learn about parenting.

“Yes – feels refreshing, brought a new light to my eyes”.

-A participant’s response to if they learned anything about the connection between fathers’ wellbeing and spending time with their child.



Community Feedback

Seventeen of the nineteen fathers in attendance at the event filled out feedback forms and provided helpful and positive comments about the event. Participants stated that they were most drawn to the event because there are not many activities that focus on fathers and daughters. All appreciated the interesting activities that involved the whole family and brought awareness to the importance of the relationship between fathers and daughters.

Many participants shared that social and community engagement was their favourite part of the event. Participants emphasized that both parents and daughters (and all children) had the opportunity to socialize with other community members. Most participants answered that yes, the activities and event fostered knowledge sharing between fathers and daughters and included helpful tips from the dads who were in facilitator roles.

Participants valued their time together and found that the focus on fathers and daughters was both unique and positive. Frequent suggestions including having more activities, guest speakers to discuss healthy families, and hosting the event at a bigger venue with the opportunity to go outside, as well as better advertising with follow up events.

The feedback overall suggests that the community would appreciate having this event happen again and supported the importance of honouring father and daughter relationships. Everyone involved acknowledged that finding ways to embrace this relationship will foster happier and healthy lives for families. The learning gained in these meaningful initiatives are usually shared by diaspora with families and friends in countries of their origin. Hence, the social impact of these community events often extends from local to global.

References

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